HOMELESSNESS IN TORONTO

A Review of the Literature from a Toronto Perspective

A project of the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

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In 2003, the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T) undertook a comprehensive review of research conducted on homelessness in Toronto during the last decade. The purpose of this review was two-fold: 1) to provide advocates and others concerned about homelessness with a resource that would enable them to easily access relevant research, and 2) to identify gaps in the research to inform future studies on homelessness in Toronto.

For the purposes of this review, we have used a broad definition of homelessness as a continuum from absolute homelessness, to concealed homelessness, inadequate and unsafe housing, people in need of housing supports and those at risk of becoming homeless due to inadequate income and lack of affordable housing.

The review indicates that though there is a substantial body of research on the issue of homelessness, specific research gaps remain. Research on housing issues of diverse ethno-racial groups of immigrants and refugees is partial and limited. The experiences of specific groups such as homeless seniors require more study. More research is needed on evictions, rent control, vacancy rates and public policy changes and its impact on homelessness.

Notwithstanding these gaps, the review reveals that despite a substantial body of research on homelessness in Toronto and numerous recommendations to address the crisis, government action is either absent or inadequate. While new studies to address the gaps in the literature will prove useful for developing effective policy options, governments need not wait for new information to address the critical problems facing homeless people in Toronto. The time for concerted action is long overdue.

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Table of Contents

Introduction Page 01

Section I Defining Homelessness Page 03

Section II Causes and Implications of Homelessness Page 05

1. Comprehensive Reports Page 05
2. Federal and Provincial Housing Policy Page 07
3. Homelessness and Income Security Page 09
4. Ethno-racial and Other Discrimination Page 11
5. Homelessness and Women Page 12
6. Homeless Youth Page 13
7. Life and Problems of Homeless People Page 15
8. Homelessness and Children Page 15
9. Homelessness and Health Page 16
10. Aboriginal Homelessness Page 17

Section III Solutions to Homelessness Page 19

1. Comprehensive Reports Page 19
2. Housing Strategies Page 24
3. The Broader Context Page 34
4. Health and Social services Page 37
5. Aboriginal Homelessness Page 39

Conclusion Page 41

Bibliography Page 43

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Introduction

In the 1997 municipal election for the newly amalgamated City of Toronto, one social issue stood out: homelessness. Former North York mayor for decades, Mel Lastman, countered media statements of his contender, Barbara Hall, by declaring that there were "no homeless in North York". Days later a homeless woman froze to death in North York, the "City with a Heart". It was seriously embarrassing to Lastman.

That was a turning point. Within a short time after his election to the new City of Toronto's highest office, Lastman recruited outspoken homeless people's advocate, Councillor Jack Layton, to head up an advisory committee on homelessness. Layton's appointment led to a national conference on homelessness and the Mayor's Homelessness Task Force led by Anne Golden, President and CEO of the United Way of Greater Toronto. In an intensive research of the problem in Toronto and surrounding regions, the Task Force produced two major reports *(Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness,* 1998*; Taking Responsibility for Homelessness,* 1999*)* and a series of background papers that were a culmination of Canadian research into housing and homelessness up to that time (see section III).

The City has followed up the report by publishing Homelessness "Report Cards", the most recent of which was issued in 2003 (see section III). These reports allow policy makers and activists to analyze the progress (or lack thereof) in solving the various aspects of the problem while providing researchers with an useful source of up to date statistics.

Alongside these reports there is a large amount of material dealing with the housing and homelessness situation among particular groups, though this material still has gaps. This reflects the reality that those at risk of homelessness in Toronto increasingly come from aboriginal, immigrant and refugee communities. There is also a growing number of policy statements from a wide range of organizations on the need for affordable housing, reflecting the fact that 20% of tenant households pay more than 50% of their income in rent, putting them in danger of homelessness. It also reflects the lack of government action in this area.

Our literature survey for the most part restricts itself to considering material dealing specifically with Toronto. While there is a vast international literature, we felt that a thorough survey of that literature would make the project unmanageably large, and that the material of most use to advocates and researchers would be that which deals directly with Toronto. We have also restricted ourselves to reviewing what we consider

to be the best and most useful material. Inevitably there will be some valuable material that we will have left out, but we believe the articles, reports and books that we have selected will provide researchers with an excellent look at homelessness in Toronto.

We have divided the material into three sections: section I, a short section on defining homelessness; section II, dealing with the causes and implications of homelessness; and finally, section III, on solutions. In a concluding section we take a brief look at gaps that might be filled by future research.

While we felt that this approach to categorizing the literature would assist readers in finding the required material, much of the material was not easy to categorize. Some reports dealt with solutions even as they were primarily about identifying the causes and implications of homelessness and vice versa. This means that sometimes it will be advisable to check different sections of our report to find material that can be of help.

Finally, it is crucial to bear in mind that while the literature on homelessness in Toronto is of high quality and provides a roadmap for policy makers, we are a very long way from solving the problem itself. Tens of thousands of people in our city either do not have permanent housing or are vulnerable to losing it. This is unworthy of a city that is healthy and thinks of itself as caring and compassionate.

Solving homelessness will require continued political pressure and public education. Those efforts will be best served, however, with analysis that is well informed and up to date. We hope that this survey makes a modest contribution to that cause.

Section I – Defining Homelessness

Defining and counting the homeless is a difficult and politically controversial subject. One method is to add up the number of people who visit shelters each day or the number of individuals who do so over a year or other time period. This has the advantage of providing a fairly solid number but leaves out the homeless who sleep outside or elsewhere outside the shelter system. The latter unfortunately are much harder to count but need to be included in any definition.

Another issue is the inclusion of those at risk for homelessness. This much larger number could include those paying more than 50% of their income in rent or who have housing arrangements that are not likely to be permanent and who cannot afford new housing. The articles below attempt to address with these issues.

Homelessness: A Proposal for a Global Definition and Classification

Springer, Sabine. Habitat International, Vol 24, 2000, pp. 475-484.
http://resources.web.net/show.cfm?id=957&APP=housing

This article examines homelessness from a global perspective and the need to come to a global consensus of what constitutes homelessness in order to better co-ordinate projects and initiatives trying to estimate the global homelessness population. The author discusses the various categories of homelessness, which are described as absolute homelessness, concealed homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless. The author provides a framework from which homelessness can be understood and that will assist in the creation of a formal definition of homelessness.

Categorizing Houselessness for Research and Policy Purposes: Absolute, Concealed and At Risk.

Hulchanski, David J. University of Toronto, Centre of Urban Studies.
http://resources.web.net/show.cfm?id=958&APP=housing

Another work that clearly defines and outlines many aspects of homelessness that are measurable and quantifiable, this article will help to demystify homelessness and all of the research difficulties that surround the issue. Some of the topics that are defined for research purposes are absolute homelessness, inadequate housing, affordability and concealed homelessness just to name a few. This article is a useful reference tool for anybody who is trying to become familiar with some of the issues that surround housing and homelessness.

Estimating Homelessness: Towards a Methodology for Counting the Homeless in Canada (Executive Summary)

Pressini, T., L. MacDonald and D. Hulchanski. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1995

http://resources.web.net/show.cfm?id=983&APP=housing.

This is the executive summary from the full report of a three-day workshop sponsored by the Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC). The workshop brought together experts ranging from government officials, academics to the service community from both the U.S. and Canada.

Several key recommendations are summarized including a suggested definition of homelessness for research purposes. Workshop participants felt that a definition of homelessness that focused on absolute homelessness was the best to use for research purposes. They felt that it was the most economical and least open for criticism.

They also recommended counting the homeless using the latter's contact with service agencies. Even those homeless who do not use shelters generally make use of these services at one time or another.

For a copy of the full report:
www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb991e.htm#COUNTING%20THE%20HOMELESStxt

Counting an Invisible Population: Why coming up with statistics on the Homeless is so difficult

Owen Wood. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, News Online, c2001

http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/background/homeless.html.

This article written by Owen Wood of CBC News Online discusses some of the difficulties that arise from trying to count the homeless population. One of the difficulties is that this population is always moving and has no fixed address. Also, any attempt to count will undoubtedly omit many individuals who should be counted. Looking at attempts taken by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Council on Social Development to count the homeless population and the difficulties that each of these study attempts faced highlights this point. This paper suggests that no matter the actual number of homeless people some action must be taken.

Section II – Causes and Implications of Homelessness

Adequate and affordable housing became the social and economic right of every citizen in Canada after the ratification of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (IESCR) in 1996. Despite this, tens of thousands of Canadians are still living on the streets, as well as in shelters, abandoned buildings and public spaces. Homelessness was not a significant issue before 1980 but with the changing policies of the federal and provincial governments and other social factors it has become a severe problem in Toronto and many other cities across Canada.

The literature described below demonstrates the impact of a number of factors in causing Toronto's homelessness crisis. The centrepiece is the withdrawal of governments, both Federal and Provincial, from the business of providing new housing for those in need. At the same time, the inexpensive private sector housing stock, that low income people depended on for decades, has been greatly reduced due to high rent increases, demolition and conversion of the stock to other uses. Loss of income has also had an impact, notably the Ontario Government's 1995 reduction in social assistance payments at 21.6% and its concerted drive to remove people from social assistance altogether.

Some of the literature also examines the trouble new immigrants and other visible minorities have in accessing affordable housing. Others have looked at homelessness among youth and single mothers.

The final sections of this chapter look at the impact of homelessness on children as well as the health impacts of homelessness.

1. Comprehensive Reports

Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto. Report of the Mayor's Homeless Action Task Force

Golden Anne, WH Currie, E Greaves, EJ Latimer. City of Toronto, 1999

Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness, Interim Report

Golden, Anne, WHCurrie, E Greaves, and EJ Latimer. City of Toronto, 1998

www.toronto.ca

[We are listing "Taking Responsibility for Homelessness" under both section II and section III because of its importance]

This is the "bible" on Toronto homelessness: a comprehensive, well resourced look at the nature of the problem and what to do about it. There is an interim report, the full report (both on the City of Toronto website) and two thick binders of background papers.

The report is very thorough on the existing situation and solutions (described in the "solutions" chapter of this report); less so on causes. Having said that, the interim report provides a summary of the most important causes: lack of affordable housing and the related problem of evictions, mental illness and addictions and poverty.

The 26 background papers are listed in at the beginning of section III but many of them are also relevant to the causes and implications of homelessness.

The 2003 Toronto Report Card on Housing and Homelessness

Shepherd, Susan. City of Toronto 2003.
www.toronto.ca

This report, updated annually by the city, provides a wealth of statistical data on issues related to homelessness. This includes housing supply, housing affordability, shelter use, rent increases and poverty levels.

Homeless People vs. the Government of Canada and the Government of the Province of Ontario

People's Court, Toronto Division, 8 December 1998
"THE ACCUSED STAND CHARGED" begins this report of a public tribunal on the legislation enacted by the Federal and Provincial governments between 1993 and 1998 which contravened the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and also violated the presumed right to housing and adequate income supports of hundreds of thousands of Canadian residents. Further, the Federal and Provincial governments were accused of discrimination against poor people, contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Witnesses were called (e.g., Dr. David Hulchanski, homeless people, mental health and legal workers, and street health workers). Exhibits were placed into evidence, including: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1976; Concluding Observations of the UN Committee's report on Canada in 1998; memoranda, reports, research studies; and a legal opinion from the UN High Commissioner on the definition of "adequate housing" rights in the Covenant.

This unusual form of advocacy was very poignant and effective in stating the case for the detrimental actions and inaction of the two senior levels of government in dealing with the needs of Canadians for shelter. It is an excellent summary of the problem of not having a national housing strategy and the political will to maintain housing supports from all governments.Affordable "Permanent" Housing

Homelessness in Scarborough for 2003: Final Report to the Scarborough Homelessness Committee

Tom Zizys. Scarborough Homelessness Committee, 2003

This is a comprehensive review of the homelessness situation in Scarborough. It is designed to be both a report card and an action plan. Scarborough has a higher percentage of its population at risk for homelessness than Toronto as a whole.

This report adds to the evidence that Scarborough and other "inner suburbs" of Toronto need more focused attention from policy makers and more services. It is increasingly there, rather than downtown, where poverty is most concentrated, yet the latter has had the most attention. Although Scarborough is the location of family shelters for the city as a whole, this does not necessarily address the totality of the problem.

2. Federal and Provincial Housing Policy

From the end of World War II to 1993, the Federal Government funded the construction of more than 400,000 social housing units, non-profit, co-op, and public housing, across Canada. Policy decisions during 1980s narrowed its role in the housing sector, culminating in its withdrawal from new construction in 1993 and the downloading of operational responsibility for much of the housing to the provinces by the early years of the new millennium.

In Ontario, Liberal and NDP Governments initially did much to pick up the slack, funding extensive new affordable housing programs from the mid '80s to the mid '90s. This was all cancelled in 1995 by the new Conservative Government.

Only very recently has the Federal Government taken small steps to get back into the housing business, with the new Ontario Liberal Government promising to do the same after it clears its budget deficit.

A number of researchers trace these developments and link them to the dramatic increase in homelessness that we have seen over the past two decades.

Housing and Homes: Housing for Canadians

John Sewell. James Lorimer and Co., 1994

The former Toronto Mayor and long time activist and media commentator takes a detailed look at housing policy in Canada, including an extensive discussion of social housing. He also has chapters on rent controls and on homelessness, though the book is not focussed on the latter per se.

This is an excellent background source for the history of housing policy from the Second World War to 1994, with many statistics and a thorough examination of the pros and cons of a variety of government programs. Sewell also looks at the arguments put forward by housing activists, and the development industry on issues like the effectiveness of non-profit housing compared to shelter allowances and other private sector programs. However, the ground has shifted since 1994. With both the federal and provincial governments completely withdrawn from supporting the construction of new social housing, the debate has focussed on getting *any* new support from government rather than precisely what kind.

State of the Crisis, 2003: Ontario Housing Policies are De-housing Ontarians. Ontario Alternative Budget 2003

Michael Shapcott. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), 2003

This paper provides many Ontario-wide statistics on the impact of the Harris-Eves Government's decision to get out of the social housing business and greatly weaken rent control. Shapcott points to a net loss of over 40,000 rental units and says that if the policies of previous governments had been continued, 59,000 more social housing units would be available. This is a rather different result than the Government promised.

Shapcott also looks at rising rents, compares the cost of shelter allowances to new social housing and outlines the ambitious plans of the "Ontario Alternative Budget", a social and labour activists' agenda supported by the CCPA.

Housing Policy for Tomorrow's Cities

Hulchanski, J. David. Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN), 2002.

This report examines the historical role of the Federal government in housing and urban development. It explains Canada's housing market and the failure of government to develop an appropriate national housing policy or strategy. Hulchanski holds government accountable and responsible for creating an exclusionary system in housing, one that is "out of balance, discriminatory in the way it treats owners and renters, one in which the market mechanism of supply and demand works for the ownership sector, but not the renter sector." He explains that housing policies evolved over three periods: 1973 - 1983, 1984 -1993, and 1995-2003.

The author notes that most Canadians are well housed and therefore not cognizant (or empathetic) of the difficulties of those living in poverty in inadequate or non-existent housing. Homeowners are a large majority of the population, are also those who are most likely to vote and vote for one of the two major parties, and that, therefore, they are catered to in development of economic and social policy. This is both demonstrated and explicitly stated by politicians from the municipal to the provincial/territorial, and federal levels of government. It is an important lesson to learn for community organizers, service providers, and housing/homelessness advocates.

The Impact of Withdrawing Subsidies for New Rental Housing: Projections for Toronto and Ontario

Skaburskis, Andrejs and Diana Mok. Housing Studies, 15(2): 169-194, 2000

This study uses census data to predict what will happen over the next 20 years if governments do not get back into the housing business. It projects the increase in rental housing that will have to be produced by Ontario municipalities over the next 25 years assuming little or no participation by other levels of government. The projections show the stock requirements under varying assumptions regarding rent-to-income ratios and size of dwelling units.

The authors claim that the projected rental population in Ontario in the year 2021 cannot be housed by the current market supply process even if low income households spent all of their after-tax income on rents for dwellings that are half the size of their current units. The magnitude of the shortfall that will have to be made up by municipalities is described along with the characteristics of the people most affected.

Early Intervention Pilot Project, Final Report

Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, 2000
www.equalrights.org.cera

CERA undertook an ambitious project to contact tenants facing eviction. They found that most were not aware of what they had to do to avoid eviction or even that they were in danger of losing their home. CERA's intervention helped many stave off eviction. The report concludes that the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal and the Tenant Protection Act do not give tenants a fair chance to defend themselves against eviction.

3. Homelessness and Income Security

A large number of people in Toronto are living in poverty, and this is an income problem as much as it is a housing problem. Nearly one Toronto household in four has an income below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off (LICO) level. Low income Torontonians rely primarily on government assistance or work for low or minimum wage. Ontario Government cuts to social assistance exacerbated the problems of low income people, as did the freeze in the minimum wage. Consequently, many individuals and families could not afford housing that meets "adequacy, suitability or affordability norms" and the population of homeless people has increased.

Holes in the Safety Net, Leaks in the Roof: Changes in Canadian Welfare Policy and Their Implications for Social Housing Programs

Michael J. Prince. 1998. Housing Policy Debate. 9(4): 825-848
www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd/pdf/hpd_0904_prince.pdf

This article provides a good overview and critique of changes to federal policy regarding social assistance and its relationship to housing. The author highlights the shift from the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) to the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) as an abandonment of the Federal Government's influence over provincial welfare policies. Indeed, as the author points out, the CHST is an unconditional grant, which means that the funds do not have to be spent on social assistance at all.

Prince notes that the Social Housing Agreement, which facilitated the transfer of the administration of existing social housing from the federal government to the provinces (and in Ontario's case ultimately to the municipalities) has more strings attached.

The author is a supporter of government spending on social housing but says that social housing and welfare policies should be more integrated. It is not clear, however, if he would support the restrictive policies that have evolved, since this article was written, under Ontario's Social Housing Reform Act. This legislation requires municipalities to impose many of the harsh administrative policies the Harris Government imposed on social assistance recipients and on tenants in rent-geared-to-income housing.

Overall, though, this article provides a good study of the implications of federal changes to social assistance and housing policy in the mid 1990s. These changes have, especially in the case of social assistance, played a low profile but crucial role in undermining the safety nets that helped prevent homelessness in the past.

Housing Affordability, Income, and Food Bank Users in the Greater Toronto Area, 1990-2000

Michalski H. Joseph. Research Bulletin # 17. Center for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2003

Housing costs rise, money for food decreases. Seems simple enough, but the factors which cause people to use food banks, to live in inadequate or unsafe housing, and to have less income than the poverty line Low Income Cut Offs can be fairly complex. Studies looking at charitable and non-profit organizations such as food banks, and the role they play in society, have been limited. Michalski tries to take our knowledge a step further by looking at the negative and positive roles that food banks play in the context of the changing economic situation and government policies.

Food and housing, two primary needs that must be met for all individuals are so closely linked, that an analysis of food bank users shows up severe housing inadequacies at the same time. The impact on both of Provincial government social policy were drastic – post-shelter household money for food and other expenses were cut almost in half by the 21.6% cut to welfare payments. That has been exacerbated by rapidly rising rents in the period of the Tenant "Protection" Act, stagnant minimum wage and social assistance rates, and other social and economic factors. Rates of individual and family use of food banks have skyrocketed in one decade.

4. Ethno-racial and Other Discrimination

Toronto is culturally the most diverse city in the world. More than half the population of this city has emigrated from other parts of the world. People from different ethno-racial backgrounds face a number of problems in their adjustment, including securing adequate housing. Many authors have pointed to discrimination in housing as a significant problem. For others, however, discrimination is not just a matter of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other differences. These researchers say that discrimination based on income denies housing to many low income people despite the fact that such discrimination does not help landlords prevent arrears from occurring.

"Human Rights, Access and Equity" CERA's recommendations for the Homelessness Action Task Force

Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, Nov. 1998 www.equalrights.org.cera

CERA says that, contrary to the usual emphasis on the overall level of supply, a big part of the homeless problem is the inability of low income renters to get access to the most affordable units. They say that discrimination on the basis of receipt of public assistance is rampant, despite it being illegal. Income criteria and the requirement for a last month's rent deposit are other measures that keep low income families from renting units they could otherwise afford.

The use of minimum income qualifications by landlords in selecting tenants: Recent human rights litigation in Canada.

Hulchanski, J. David. Int'l Sociological Association Conference on Housing in the 21st Century, Virginia, June, 1997

This paper condemns the use of "rule of thumb" income criteria by landlords in determining eligibility to rent a particular apartment. The author traces the use of this criteria back to the mid 19th century and says it was based on assumptions about household allocation of resources that are invalid. He says that the continuing use of this criteria wrongly prevents low income people from accessing housing.

A Comparison of the Rental Housing Experience of Polish and Somali Newcomers in Toronto

Murdie, Robert A. CUCS Research Bulletin #9, July 2002

Somali and Polish immigrant newcomers were interviewed in their own language and asked about their rental housing situations. Only those who had made at least three moves were included. The Poles did not report significant housing discrimination whereas the Somalis did. The Somalis also had significantly less income--after a number of years only 32% of households surveyed had income of over $20,000 per year compared to 60% for the Poles. The Poles also reported their housing situation as

improving whereas the Somalis had actually moved into cheaper and smaller units. This study helps us to understand the experiences of immigrants who may be vulnerable to homelessness.

State of Knowledge on Housing Discrimination

Phil Deacon et al. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Ottawa, 2002

This report provides an overview of current research on the extent to which housing discrimination exists in Canada. The report looks at different ways researchers have tried to determine the incidence of discrimination, including a review of human rights complaints and surveys of perceived discrimination. They find that an audit in which testers from two different racial groups approach landlords about the availability of an advertised unit is the most reliable. This method is used more in the US than in Canada. Overall, the research, conducted by differing methods, shows that "racial discrimination is a continuing problem for some groups in the private rental housing sector". The authors suggest a number of ways in which further research could more thoroughly examine the issue.

Living on the Ragged Edges: Immigrants, refugees and homelessness in Toronto (Forum Summary)

Robert Murdie. CERIS, 2003
http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/housing_neighbourhoods/Ragged%20Edges%20031113.pdf

The purpose of this forum, held March 28, 2003, was to discuss and address some of the needs, concerns and difficulties that immigrants and refugees face when trying to access housing.

The forum addressed issues of access and equity in housing and the specific effects of barriers such as race, class, gender, sexuality, religion and mental health status on housing opportunities. It also looked at recommendations from current research designed to improve government policies in these areas.

The forum summary also provides key information from various workshops that were conducted during the event and some statistical information from studies that were conducted previously. It also identifies various areas where there is a need for more research such as the phenomenon of hidden homelessness amongst refugee and immigrant populations.

5. Homelessness and Women

No Room of Her Own: A Literature Review on Women and Homelessness

Sylvia Novac, Joyce Brown, Carmen Bourbonnais. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1996

http://www.ginsler.com/documents/noroom.pdf

This report was produced to analyse the effects and causes of homelessness on women in a Canadian context. It discusses the increased rate of homelessness amongst women and some of the reasons behind it. Since the 1960's homelessness people have diverged from the old stereotypes and have included young people, women, racial minorities and others. The report also suggests that violence in the home is usually a precursor to homelessness amongst women and taking to the streets is sometimes the only way to avoid abusive relationships.

On Her Own: Young Women and Homelessness in Canada

Novac, S. Luba Serge, Margaret Eberle and Joyce Brown. Status of Women Canada, 2002

Homeless young women are a growing population whose legitimate needs are falling between the cracks says this report based on interviews with over 100 informants across Canada. Sexual and physical abuse is a serious problem for homeless women, continuing the situation many of them ran away from. Aboriginals, lesbians and former wards of the child welfare system are more likely than others to wind up homeless. This study offers a lot of information and recommendations for action by government and others.

6. Homeless Youth

Sexual and physical abuse are significant factors leading to homelessness among youth. Homeless youth more often come from families with unemployed members and divorced parents. Physical and sexual abuse, maltreatment by the parents especially from step fathers, problems at school, alcohol and drug use are some of the problems which lead many youth to homelessness.

Making Money: The Shout Clinic Report on Homeless Youth and Employment

Gaetz, S., Bill O'Grady and Bryant Vaillancourt. Central Toronto Community Health Centre, 1999

The Shout Clinic, Toronto conducted surveys of 360 homeless youth and 20 taped interviews in 1999 to determine the needs and capacities of street youth with regards to employment. Research results indicated that street youths come from all walks of life - rich, poor and middle class. For the most part, it is an unbearable home life that leads young people to leave home. A very high percentage of street youth was brought up in foster care and many of those who were not in foster care had lost a parent. For others, it was difficulties at school, substance use issues in the home (either children or adults) and lack of social acceptance for youth who were lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The study showed that street youths were engaged in a wide variety of activities for making money. The employment choices were mostly shaped by their experiences prior

to or while on the street. The most disadvantaged, both in terms of past and present circumstances, were involved in the sex industry. On the other hand those in the paid employment sector had relatively less traumatic childhoods. The study revealed that adoption of sex trade, panhandling or squeegeeing over paid employment was not the choice, but the most viable means of generating income under their life circumstances.

Homeless Squeegee Kids: Food Insecurity and Daily Survival

Naomi Dachner, Valerie Tarasuk. Research Bulletin #7. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2002

Naomi Dachner interviewed six street youth as well as chatting with them informally. This was done in 1998 before the Safe Streets Act made "squeegeeing" illegal.

In addition to serious health problems, the youth reported that obtaining enough food was a constant problem with many going hungry frequently. The study, while limited in terms of the numbers interviewed and possibly the reliability of information shared with a stranger by homeless youths, nonetheless provides valuable insights about the daily struggle to survive experienced by these young people.

Physical abuse in Canadian runaway adolescents

Janus, M.D., Archambault F.X., Brown, S.W., Welsh, L.A. Child Abuse and Neglect 19:433-47, 1995

This study describes in detail the physical abuse endured by 195 runaway adolescents. The results are inconsistent with the findings of other studies, suggesting that there is more work left to be done.

Environmental Scan on Youth Homelessness

CMHC Research Highlights, Socio-economic series, Issue 86
http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio086.pdf.

The purpose of the study was to provide an overview of the homeless youth population, including their shelter situation as well as effective housing interventions that have benefited them. One of the key findings is that many homeless youth had the same characteristics. They usually were exposed to physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Homeless youth also tended to have little to no family ties, had been raised on foster homes and suffered from poor physical health. The homeless situation is very serious in the Aboriginal community in Ottawa where Aboriginal youth make up 18.5% of the homeless youth population but where only 1.5% of the population is Aboriginal.

7. Life and Problems of Homeless People

Rooming House Residents

Stephen Hwang, Rochelle Martin, J. David Hulchanski and George Tolomiczenko. Research Bulletin # 16. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2003

This research bulletin outlines the results of a survey of 295 rooming house residents conducted by Inner City Health Research Unit, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto and Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto. The result is a fascinating portrait of an often poorly understood population. Rooming houses are considered the lowest rung on the housing ladder, just above homelessness; yet they do provide affordable housing. The demise of a large proportion of the rooming house stock is an important factor in the increase in homelessness over the past two decades.

One third of survey recipients had been homeless and 60% had chronic health problems while only one third were employed. There were also some surprises, however: 15% had university degrees and 53% had their highschool diploma or more. Furthermore, heavy drinkers were in the minority.

The survey results should be considered as interesting evidence rather than as definitive because the data relies entirely on what residents were willing to share with the interviewers. People may have various reasons for not being entirely candid about their lives when asked questions by strangers. In addition, the survey sample may not be representative, as the authors admit, because some residents were unable to speak English or unwilling to participate.

8. Homelessness and Children

One in Five: Housing as a Factor in the Admission of Children to Care

Chau Shirley, Ann, Fitzpatrick, J. David Hulchanski, Bruce Leslie and Debbie Schatia. Research Bulletin # 5. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2001

This Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST) survey updates a 1992 study and finds that the number of children admitted into care at least partly because of housing problems increased from 290 (or 18% of the total) to 450 (or 21%) in 2000. Housing as a factor in delaying the return of a child also increased from 8.6% of the total to 11.5%. This is one more indication of the price of Toronto's housing problems.

Housing Affordability: A Children's Issue

Cooper Merrill. Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa, 2001

This paper attempts to re-insert affordable housing into national policy on children. Fighting child poverty has been a goal of governments for some time yet the paper says

housing policy has run counter to the needs of low income children. The author provides a detailed argument for making housing an important part of any strategy for children.

9. Homelessness and Health

Homelessness affects tens of thousands of Canadians and has important health implications. Homeless people are at increased risk of dying prematurely and suffer from a wide range of health problems, including seizures, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, muscular-skeletal disorders, tuberculosis, and skin and foot problems. Homeless people also face significant barriers that impair their access to health care. Some of the issues are discussed in the following articles.

Homelessness and Health

Hwang S. W. Canadian Medical Association Journal. 164 (1): 229-33, 2001
http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/164/2/229.pdf

This paper is an excellent source for statistics on the health problems and health system usage of homeless people. Dr. Hwang, an often quoted authority on homelessness and health issues in Toronto, has prepared a concise footnoted summary of current data.

Among his findings: homeless people are admitted to hospital up to five times more often than the general population, a situation which has serious cost implications. Hospitals often discharge homeless people to shelters despite their inability to function in this environment while recovering from illness. Homeless people also sometimes avoid dealing with health problems because of more pressing priorities like finding food or shelter. They can have trouble accessing medication and are sometimes refused treatment because they have lost their health card.

Housing as a Socio-Economic Determinant of Health: Assessing Research Needs

James R. Dunn. Research Bulletin # 15. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2003

The authors begin by pointing out that health improves the higher one goes on the socio-economic spectrum. This is not just a phenomenon at the margins--with homeless people having poor health. They maintain that health gradually improves with increasing socio-economic status. Housing, the marker for which they call a contributor to socio-economic inequality, is part of that picture.

The article is a summary of a study conducted by an interdisciplinary team for the National Housing Research Committee and the Canadian Housing Renewal Association. It focuses on seven dimensions of housing: physical hazards, physical design, psychological dimensions, social dimensions, political dimensions, financial dimensions and housing location, all of which have the potential to generate social

inequalities and health consequences. It concludes that significantly more research is needed into the health impacts of people's housing situation, not only the physical condition of housing but also the psychological and economic implications.

Mental Illness and Pathways into Homelessness: Findings and Implications, Proceedings and Recommendations

Mental Health Policy Research Group. Toronto: Ontario Mental Health Foundation, 1998

The Pathways project involved a study of 300 homeless people with researchers attempting to identify mental health, substance abuse and other issues and to track how people became homeless. The researchers were frequently challenged from the floor and accused of ignoring housing and 'pathologizing' the poor. The researchers responded that they agreed that housing, or lack thereof, was a very important factor in homelessness, but that they were trying to integrate different factors contributing to homelessness.

Mortality among men using homeless shelters in Toronto, Ontario

Hwang S. W. JAMA. 283: 2152-57, 2000

The study was conducted on men aged 18 years or older who used homeless shelters in Toronto in 1995. It compared mortality rates among men using homeless shelters with the general Toronto population, and examined whether mortality rates differ significantly among men using homeless shelters in Canadian and US cities.

The mean age of death for homeless people in the Toronto study was 45 years. The data also showed a mortality rate among homeless people of 3 to 4 times that of the general population in Toronto, however, that is lower than the rate for those using shelters in major US cities. The paper suggests further research to identify the reasons for this disparity.

10. Aboriginal Homelessness

Urban Aboriginal Homelessness In Canada

Maggie Wente, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

> *ABORIGINAL HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES are in a bad state, by all measures falling below the standards that prevail elsewhere in Canada and threatening the health and well-being of Aboriginal people. The inadequacy of these services is visible evidence of the poverty and marginalization experienced disproportionately by Aboriginal people.*
>
> *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1998*

Conditions of inadequate housing and insufficient community services, rates of disease and dearth of health care, woman and child abuse, lack of educational and job

opportunities on First Nations reserves are just some of the factors pushing young and female Aboriginals into the urban centres. Anywhere from 17% to 50% of households on those reserves are living in inadequate shelter.

Since the 1970s, there has been a large migration from the reserves to cities. Some 320,000 self-identified Aboriginal people live in cities – 45% of the total Aboriginal population – and the numbers are expected to grow. Toronto has a large population of First Nations individuals and families, possibly because there are numerous Native services and culturally-specific housing here, as well as job and educational opportunities. But, as stated by Maggie Wente, 15-25% of Toronto's homeless are of Aboriginal descent, despite the fact that they represent less than 2% of the city's population. Another 8,000 families are assumed to be at risk of homelessness.

Despite a lack of research on the subject, Wente attempts to answer the question, "Why are so many Aboriginal people homeless?" Her overview and exploration of this subject is very well done and a thoughtful addition to the knowledge we have on Aboriginal peoples in the urban environment.

Housing Need Among Off-reserve Aboriginal Lone Parents in Canada

CMHC Research and Development Highlights, Socio-economic series, Issue 34

http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio034.pdf

This report uses 1991 census data to analyze the core housing need that is experienced by lone parent Aboriginal Parents in Canada. The report provides a useful snap shot of some of the housing needs of lone parent aboriginal people, as well as some of the factors that lead to this situation. It concludes that those who are in core housing need are there because of low incomes and the difficulty of entering the labour force due to child rearing responsibilities.

Section III – Responses To Government Action

With homelessness raging across the country, and around the world, the amount of literature on housing conditions and homelessness is growing faster than the building of affordable rental units in major urban centres. Many studies have been done, and much has been written about this issue.

What have been the policy actions or directions of the various levels of government? What recommendations are made by people studying the crisis from an academic, advocacy, or community development point of view? Is the problem too complex, with too many factors identified as causes of homelessness or are the answers simple, straightforward and yet beyond the political will of the gatekeepers of the national and provincial purses?

Some of the answers may be found in the documents, reports, books, and surveys found here. The Mayor's Homelessness Task Force led by, then president of the United Way of Greater Toronto, Dr. Anne Golden, provides perhaps the most complete and in-depth assessment and recommendations of any work done in Canada. Communities from St. Johns to Victoria have taken steps to deal with the crisis of housing and homelessness. What will actually effect changes to the underlying problems – construction of affordable housing, development of income supports or redistribution of wealth, the creation and increase of necessary transitional support housing and services for more vulnerable people? Without the pressure of public concern and opinion being brought to bear on our elected officials, little improvement is likely to be made. The literature here and throughout this work can be used to inform and educate. It may be a stepping stone to the kinds of action that will finally eradicate the problem of homelessness and poverty that millions of Canadians face today.

1. Comprehensive Reports on Homelessness

Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto (Report of the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force)

Anne Golden et al, City of Toronto, 1999

http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/mayor/homelessnesstf3.htm

If one wishes to consult the 'bible' of homelessness research in Canada, one needs to read the "Golden Report", *Taking Responsibility for Homelessness*, and the background papers that served as its foundation. The document, from cover to cover, is a large ton of 294 pages, obviously not something one would read from beginning to end. It makes a great reference tool, both for definitions of homelessness as a continuum of conditions that change for each person and from time to time, and for the well-worked out strategy for breaking the back of the crisis. This report provided a framework for the

development of Toronto's Community Plan for utilizing the new federal homelessness funds in 2000, called Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative.

Golden works within a framework that there is goodwill on the part of all levels of government, who will work together to deal with the complex factors and causes of homelessness once they see the scope of the problem laid out before them through the report. One of the important issues that the author raises is that the plan is holistic, it must be dealt with as a single thing with many legs and not be seen as a buffet where each government chooses those pieces they would most like to work on. Some of the key recommendations for Toronto include: 2,000 units of affordable housing must be built every year; 5,000 units of supportive housing with services over five years; a facilitator appointed by the Mayor and Council for five years, to coordinate plans and programs; shelter allowances to help working poor reduce costs to 35-40 percent of household income; protection of existing affordable housing; special supports to populations that are more marginalized; eviction prevention; harm reduction programs.

This is "everything you always wanted to know about homelessness, but didn't know how to ask" all in one book. Obviously, this is something that should be on the shelf (or the hard drive) of every politician, social/human service provider, public institution and in libraries.

The extensive background reports listed below, not available on line, offer a wealth of detail. They were all written in 1998.

1. Caragata, Lea and Susan Hardie: "Social Housing Waiting List Analysis: A Report on Quantitative and Qualitative Findings"

2. Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation: "Human Rights, Access and Equity: CERA's Recommendations for the Homelessness Action Task Force"

3. Dowling, Paul: "Analysis of Funding for Homeless Initiatives in Toronto"

4. Eakin, Lynn and Mary Thelander: "Service System Design: Services for Homeless People"

5. Genier, Rob: "City of Toronto Income Trends"

6. Genier, Rob: "Trends in the Conventional Rental Market"

7. Hunter, Patrick: "A Homeless Prevention Strategy for Immigrants"

8. Kushner, Carol: "Better Access, Better Care: A Research Paper on Health Services and Homelessness in Toronto"

9. Lapointe, Linda: "Options for Evictions Prevention"

10. Mendelson, Michael, Andy Mitchell and Mikael Swayze: "Trends in Poverty in the New City of Toronto"

11. Novac, Sylvia amd Mary Anne Quance "Back to Community: An Assessment of Supportive Housing in Toronto"

12. Obonsowin, Roger: "A Planning Framework for Addressing Aboriginal Homelessness in the City of Toronto"

13. Orchard, Lisa: "Prior Recommendations on Homelessness in the City of Toronto 1983-97

14. Orchard, Lisa: "Single Room Occupancy Development: A Viable Option for Toronto"

15. Pollock, Sheryl: "Strategies for Homeless Youth"

16. Pomeroy, Steve and Will Dunning: "Housing Solutions to Homelessness: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Different Types of Shelter"

17. Pomeroy, Steve (Focus Consulting): "The Use of Rental Assistance Measures in a Strategy to Prevent Homelessness"

18. Reville, David (David Reville and Associates): "A Proposal for Expanded Community Economic Development Initiatives"

19. Singer, Nancy: "Report on Group Consultations"

20. Springer, Joseph and James Mars: "A profile of the Toronto Homeless Population"

21. Starr, Edward (TCI Convergence): "Housing Supply and Affordability: Rooming Houses and Second Suites"

22. Suttor, Greg: "Proposed Housing Supply Strategy"

23. Szadlowski, Carolyn: "Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions"

24. Ward, Jim and David Reville: "Consultation with Homeless People Regarding the Interim Report of the Homelessness Action Task Force"

25. Ward, Jim (Jim Ward Associates): "Locally Based Approaches to Prevention and Rescue from Homelessness"

26. Ward, Jim (Jim Ward Associates): "The Role and Function of Emergency Hostels in Dealing with Homelessness"

Homelessness: the making and unmaking of a crisis

Jack Layton, Penguin Canada and the McGill Institute, 2000
[Available in bookstores and libraries]

The book outlines the rapidly growing problem of homeless in Canada based on personal experiences and new unpublished data (in 2000) from across the country. You can also find analysis of how Canadians came to be faced with this terrible situation. Finally, solutions developed by the best housing minds in Canada are pulled together into a comprehensive set of solutions based on a new National Housing Policy.

Layton outlines the debate that continues in Canada over whether people choose to be homeless, become homeless because they make bad choices, and are not the deserving poor versus the perspective that puts systemic economic and social factors and social values and attitudes of many Canadians convinced by the first argument. But more importantly, he assesses the real state of knowledge about homelessness and its causes and solutions, from Victoria, BC to St. Johns, Newfoundland, in small towns and big cities, on reserves and in the suburbs. The book does not end with the identification of the problem, but with a number of economic, construction, policy-making, and advocacy tactics that would help end ("making and unmaking") the crisis.

The Homeless

Jencks, Christopher. Harvard University Press, 1994

This book examines many aspects of homelessness from a U.S. perspective. The author examines what is involved and needed to effectively count the homeless population, and what some of the promising and not so promising explanations of homelessness are. He also offers some recommendations to try and alleviate homelessness. Like many other authors who have written about homelessness and attempted to define it, Jencks provides a definition that places homelessness on a continuum rather than a static idea or concept and points out that many people live along that continuum.

GIMME SHELTER! Homelessness and Canada's Social Housing Crisis

Nick Falvo, Toronto: CSJ Foundation for Research and Education, 2003
http://www.socialjustice.org/publications.php?filter=author

Nick Falvo's paper on homelessness, GIMME SHELTER!, looks at homelessness in Canada, but focuses in on Toronto's situation. Falvo examines the causes and social impacts of homelessness. He then addresses some of the governments' policies and their relation to the crisis, pointing out how the federal government, in particular, creates "housing apartheid" through the tax subsidies provided to private homeowners versus that for public and social housing providers.

In this work, three primary recommendations are made to end the crisis. First, implement the 1% Solution (one percent more of the budget at each level of government be allocated to affordable housing, rent supplements, transitional housing and support

services). Second, enshrine a Housing Bill of Rights (as per the members bill put forward by M.P. Libby Davies of Vancouver) that entrenches in law the right to affordable housing for all residents in Canada, something the state agreed to in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the International Covenant on Human Rights. Finally, establish a regularized annual process of participatory budgeting taking off from the work done in Brazil and various localities in Canada, now to include an initial foray into this type of democracy by the new Toronto City Council. Nick Falvo's work provides some very useful and passionate arguments about homelessness and the way out of the crisis.

Toronto 2003 Report Card on Housing and Homelessness

Susan Shepherd (Ed.), City of Toronto, Community and Neighbourhood Services, Social Development and Administration, 2003

http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/homelessness/index.htm

In 1999, the City Council directed staff to produce a regular report card, recommended by the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force, to monitor changes in the state of the homelessness crisis and relevant government initiatives (if any) to ameliorate or eliminate the problem. Report cards were produced for 2000, 2001 and this latest one. Utilizing representatives of service providers and advocates for homeless people to assist in the planning and production of the reports, each Report Card has proven to be of immense and practical help to many in the city.

In the section, Conclusions and Future Action, the Report Card points out that there is still a big problem of poverty and homelessness. While they acknowledge the initiatives taken and the progress made, they also point out that it is "incremental simply due to the sheer size of the problem and the limited magnitude of the response". The level of funding is not on the scale required, nor are the program objectives as sharp and strategic as they need to be. Senior levels of government, who have the money and the power to make the serious changes, need to improve incomes of the poorest and get back into the business of building affordable and supportive housing. The authors then go on to make a number of concrete recommendations to all levels of government, listing the "Future Actions Needed" on a sidebar for clear and easy reading. Just the "Overview", in the first 18 pages of the Report, would be useful for anyone who is serving populations at risk of, or in distress from, homelessness and for whoever cares about this crisis.

Can Canada Afford to Help Cities, Provide Social Housing, and End Homelessness? Why Are Provincial Governments Doing So Little? (Notes for discussion)

J.D. Hulchanski, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2002

http://www.tdrc.net/ [Click "Resources" then "Reports/Articles"]

David Hulchanski, a major figure in homelessness movement and a leader in housing research, begins these "notes" with an analysis of the surpluses, tax breaks, and other financial resources available to the federal Liberals over the last few years. Hulchanski makes the case that, in fact, Canada can afford to deal with these issues. These kinds of hard facts, that dispel the myths (excuses) proffered by politicians to the media, can help people take on what seems like an insurmountable problem. Often it is the perceived size of the problem, which paralyses public action to change it.

"A country as wealthy as Canada can respond to the macro-economic conditions and personal life circumstances of people who become houseless. Canada does not have to let its cities and its lower-income neighbourhoods decline, as happened in the United States. . . . The federal, provincial and territorial governments have the authority and the resources to ensure respect for and the implementation of all human rights of all Canadians. There is a vast array of policy instruments available and they are technically and financially feasible."

2. Housing Strategies

Housing for All Canadians: An additional $2 billion for a comprehensive national housing strategy (Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance)

Michael Shapcott, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, U. of T., National Housing and Homelessness Network and Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 2002
www.tdrc.net

Several hundred thousand social housing units, providing good quality, cost effective homes, were funded under post-1973 federal programs. However, from 1984 to 1993 about $1.8 billion was cut from national housing programs. In 1993, the federal government cancelled all funding for new housing. Ontario's new PC government stopped all housing development by non-profits and co-ops in 1995. Most of Canada's provinces and territories joined the downward slide in the 1990s.

Basing their view that the One Percent Solution is affordable to the Federal government because of large budgetary surpluses over several years (for June 2002 alone the surplus was $4.8 billion), they called for a renewed national housing strategy. Canada is the only advanced, industrial country without a national housing strategy, despite some recent initiatives such as the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI or "skippy") and the Affordable Housing Framework Agreement, which requires equal contributions from the provinces, contributions that have not been forthcoming.

For an explanation of the One Percent Solution and background data on the Federal and Provincial housing efforts, this report is invaluable. Shapcott has been a leading housing advocate and educator in Toronto and across Canada for many years.

Finding Room: Housing Solutions for the Future (Report of the National Liberal Caucus Task Force on Housing)

Paul Martin, M.P. & Joe Fontana, M.P.

http://www.housingagain.web.net/pmartin.html

"The federal role in housing must not be a residual one. The connection between housing and other aspects of both social and economic policy means that the federal government must take a lead role.... Our market housing system has not responded adequately to all of society's needs.... The Task Force believes that ... all Canadians have the right to decent housing, in decent surroundings, at affordable prices."

What would a national strategy for the housing crisis in Canada look like? It might start by declaring the human right to adequate housing (as expressed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). It would likely recognize that the housing crisis has created a huge problem of homelessness and poverty in Canada. The plight of aboriginal people would be taken up both in the cities and in rural areas or reserves. Looking at affordable housing, it would affirm that such housing was becoming more rare and largely out of reach of the lowest ten to twenty percent of the population.

That's what Paul Martin, MP and Joe Fontana, MP came up with in their cross-Canada consultation and report on the housing situation in this country. They made 25 good recommendations to the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney that could seriously reduce or eradicate the mass homelessness beginning in Canada, especially in cities such as Toronto. And, that report and those recommendations are exactly what Paul Martin, Jean Chretien, and the federal Liberals ignored when they came to power. For advocates of affordable housing, this is invaluable ammunition to take to the new Paul Martin Liberal government beginning in 2004.

The One Percent Solution

J.David Hulchanski, Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, 1999

www.tdrc.net

Canada is the only industrialized country not to have a senior level government (federal/ provincial) housing policy. To fund a housing strategy the TDRC proposes the One Percent Solution – that all levels of government spend an additional one percent of their existing total budgets on housing.

The One Percent Solution, formulated by Dr. David Hulchanski and made the prime campaign of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, is based on a calculation of the combined spending of all levels of government – federal, provincial, territorial and municipal. Add up the amount of money all levels of government are spending on housing and it equals about one percent of overall government spending. The 1% Solution calls for a doubling of this effort. This can be phased in over a three to five year period.

This strategy would not only substantially increase the number of housing units but would also increase the support services for people who need housing. There would be funding for new construction, renovation of existing units and subsidies for people on low incomes. The 1% Solution is affordable (about 50 cents per tax payer per day) and modest ('catch up' spending: in real terms, the 1% Solution is only replacing the amount of money cut out of housing and related programs by the federal government since 1984). "The funds would supply (1) adequate housing, (2) adequate support services, and (3) adequate jobs, job training and social assistance – thereby ending mass homelessness in Canada."

An Act to provide for adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians
Libby Davies, MP, Parliament of Canada, 2001
http://resources.web.net/show.cfm?id=1271&app=housing

Canada is a "state party" signer to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provide for access to adequate housing as a fundamental human right. The enjoyment of other human rights such as those to: privacy, respect for the home, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, environmental health, security of the person, freedom of association, equality before the law and other rights are indivisible from and indispensable to the realization of the right to adequate housing. Canada's wealth and national budget are more than adequate to ensure that every woman, child, and man residing in Canada has secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing as part of a standard of living that will provide healthy, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social development and a good quality of life. The achievement of improved housing conditions is best realized through co-operative partnerships of government, civil society and the meaningful involvement of local communities. Also the Parliament of Canada wishes to ensure the establishment of national goals and programs that seek to improve the quality of life for all Canadians as a basic right. Therefore MP Libby Davies of Vancouver put forward in a private members bill that the Canadian government enact and enshrine:

Housing as a human right, "3. (1) Subject to this Act, every individual has the right to secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing, as defined in this Act" free from discrimination, and with security of tenure and financial assistance for those who need it.

A national housing strategy for the economically disadvantaged will be implemented, "8. (1) The Minister shall develop and undertake, in cooperation with the governments of the provinces and municipalities, including the conference referred to in section 12, a national housing strategy and programs to carry it out to ensure the fulfillment of the rights granted by this Act."

Options for Affordable Housing (Speech by Steven W. Mahoney, former Secretary of State responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2003 Ottawa Affordable Housing Forum
http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/News/spba/2003/spba_066.cfm

"Clearly, the commitment of our government to quality, affordable housing has never been stronger. In its 2003 Budget, the Government of Canada confirmed its commitment to sustaining vital, healthy communities through investments in affordable housing for Canadians in need."

In a very interesting attempt to paint the federal government as a constant source of funds and resources to the housing sector in Canada, the Honourable Steven W. Mahoney demonstrates the skill of Liberal politicians in misdirection and "spin" more than convincing evidence or arguments. As though billions of Canadians' tax dollars were not cut from housing development between 1986 and 1999, first by the federal government and then the provincial governments, the Liberals are proudly promoting their barely adequate contributions to eliminating homelessness.

Under serious pressure from municipal and provincial governments, the business sector, the churches, and everyday citizens outraged by the growing crisis in every Canadian city, they are now putting back with one hand $1 for each $8 taken by the other. Their contribution to the Affordable Housing Initiative will amount to $1 billion over five years. The One Percent Solution documents and most research including Toronto's Golden Report, say that at least $2 billion a year is required to just get a handle on the housing crisis. Reading of this speech should be done within the context of some of the other literature available, to inoculate the reader from manipulation.

Affordable, Available, Achievable: Practical Solutions to Affordable Housing Challenges

Toronto Board of Trade, April 2003
www.bot.com/assets/StaticAssets/Documents/PDF/Policy/FINALBOTAffordableHouseReport031.pdf

"Ultimately, the supply of affordable housing affects the success of all businesses. Along with other infrastructure components, it helps to determine whether or not companies and employees locate in the city. A lack of affordable housing can lead to a host of other, more serious social and economic problems."

This is a thorough analysis of the problems of the lack of affordable housing and poverty in the City of Toronto from the perspective of, and the impacts on, the business community. The Toronto Board of Trade has been speaking out about homelessness and the lack of affordable housing for several years. From speeches by Elyse Allan, the CEO, to reports by Board research staff, they have been quite active, if expectedly conservative in some of their attitudes. Recommendations are made, in this document, by the Board of Trade to government and a summary of recommendations by level of

government is found in the Appendices. Such documents are useful due to the influence of the business sector on the public and politicians.

This recent publication puts forward five reasons why affordable housing and an end to homelessness are necessary for business. One, affordable housing is a selling point to attract and retain employees. Two, Toronto must house people who provide essential services (tourism, hospitality, and retail). Three, businesses must remain competitive with labour costs and rising housing costs push up wage demands. Four, healthy and productive employees are necessary and absenteeism costs. Five, massive gridlock is costing businesses much money and will get worse without affordable housing in the city. This is followed by eight recommendations starting with a National Housing Strategy and ending with Provincial Bonds. These pleas by business for housing assistance add a new and powerful voice to advocacy groups approaching the federal and provincial governments.

Affordable Housing in Canada: In Search of a New Paradigm

TD Economics, Tuesday, June 17, 2003

http://www.td.com/economics/special/special.html

TD Economics calls on policy makers in all governments to develop a new approach to the problem of affordable housing. "An inadequate housing supply can be a roadblock to business investment and growth, and influences a potential immigrant's decision on whether or not to locate in Canada. Addressing this serious situation ties in well with the goal of raising the standard of living for all Canadians."

Some 1.7 million people cannot afford market rents that put shelter costs over 30% of their gross income. And the shortages of housing are affecting cities of all sizes, towns, and rural areas. The ultimate solution, according to this report, is to find a "new paradigm" for solutions to the affordable housing problem. Instead of the supply side approach taken by many, TD Economics calls for a solution grounded in raising market incomes. "Maintaining a strong and stable economic environment, combined with measures to knock down barriers for low-income households" so they can improve their incomes, should be governments' priority.

Building Solutions: A Business Perspective on Toronto's Homelessness and Housing Crisis

Toronto Board of Trade, 2000

www.bot.com

An important new ally in the fight for a national housing strategy and increased government resources for the homelessness crisis is the Toronto Board of Trade. Government programs to assist the homeless must address both the direct and underlying systemic causes of homelessness, according to the Board. They feel that the government needs to focus on the specific needs of the individuals and families they

seek to help. This document can be useful in recruiting the business community to the cause, in developing housing alternatives and in winning public support in the fight against "NIMBYism".

Governments must recognize and act on their responsibility to address homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing in the view of the Board. Responsibility for housing should not be downloaded to municipalities. The federal government, working closely with provincial and municipal governments, social agencies and the business community must immediately develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated national housing strategy with regulatory policies and budget allocations to address homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing.

The recommendations of the Board of Trade focus on expediting the affordable housing. All kinds of tools are already in the hands of government: fees and charges, taxes, zoning powers, building approvals, financing, surplus lands and buildings, etc. The municipal and provincial government can take the lead in developing partnerships with developers. Municipalities can advocate with the federal government for greater financial support and with the province for subsidies and rent supplements to help individuals and families avoid losing their homes. Toronto area businesses should continue to work with and expand their contributions to community outreach projects that help the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless.

Ontario Alternative Budget 2001-2003

Various authors

www.policyalternatives.ca

The Ontario Alternative Budget (OAB) proposes that the province get back into the housing business with a set of programs that address both affordability and supply. In addition, the OAB would make the rents affordable for more than 27,000 households living in existing private or social housing. The cost of provincial social housing programs would be uploaded from municipalities back to Queen's Park.

The OAB would set aside $850 million to return the funding responsibility for provincial social housing programs back to the province, where it belongs. The OAB program would be phased in. The first year would see the full provincial share of the new federal-provincial program (2,000 new units), plus almost half of the planned new annual allocation of units (6,000 new units out of the planned total of 13,000). In addition, half the new rent supplement units (28,500 units) would be funded in the first year, with the full annual allocation in subsequent years.

This alternative financial budget for the province can be a useful tool in showing a realistic and factual model of housing development and supports for a fully committed government. Of course, getting such a government is the primary difficulty.

Ontario Alternative Budget 2002: Profiting from a manufactured housing crisis.
Michael Shapcott
http://www.policyalternatives.ca/

What has the Ontario Provincial government actually done about housing and homelessness in Ontario? Using direct funding for shelter allowances (at a rate reduced since 1995), direct tax grants, and other incentives to developers, they have tried to stimulate the market enough to increase affordable housing.

The province has also made a number of regulatory changes that benefit private developers: Regulations under the *Fair Municipal Finance Act* allow municipalities to create a separate class for new rental buildings and offer favourable tax treatment. Amendments made to a regulation under the *Municipal Act* will allow municipalities to provide financial incentives to private sector developers of affordable housing through reduced fees and charges, low interest loans, the elimination of taxes and waiving or reducing development charges. Amendments have also been made to the *Building Code, Development Charges Act* and *Planning Act* – all designed to cut the regulations and development charges facing developers. However, only 873 rental units were built in the last three years in Toronto, but more than 5,000 units were lost from the rental market.

This report complements "Housing for All" which dealt mostly with Federal government spending. It makes a strong case that the provincial government has done much less than it claimed, and then contrasts that with the Ontario Alternative Budget proposals for the development of affordable housing.

Enough Talk: An Action Plan for the Toronto Region
Toronto City Summit Alliance, 2003
http://www.torontocitysummit.ca/TCSA_report.pdf

The Toronto City Summit Alliance represents a coalition of over 40 civic leaders from the private, labour, voluntary and public sectors in the Toronto region. "With its five million residents, one-fifth of Canada's entire GDP and 40 per cent of Canada's business head offices, the Greater Toronto Area is Canada's largest driver of economic activity and the source of significant spin-off jobs throughout the country," says the report of the Alliance. The list of Steering Committee members reads like a "Who's Who" of corporate, institutional, labour and community service CEOs in the Toronto area.

Using research and statements from the financial and business, academic, and governmental sectors, the Alliance calls on governments to implement six initiatives to reverse the housing crisis. These include: 1) provide 10,000 rent supplements for existing and prospective high-need tenants; 2) make annual adjustments to the shelter component of social assistance to reflect local housing costs; 3) create 40,000 new rental housing units over 10 years, 25,000 of these units to be truly affordable on a rent-geared-to-income basis through a rent supplement program targeted at new affordable

rental buildings; 4) create 5,000 new supportive housing units for those who need social service support with their housing; 5) continue existing homeless support programs, such as the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative that the federal government recently renewed; 6) bring 45,000 pre-1973 units of existing social housing to a good state of repair.

Where's Home? A picture of housing needs in Ontario

Noreen Dunphy et al. Toronto: Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, 2000

http://www.housingagain.web.net/whome/whereshome.pdf

Where's Home? studies some key indicators of Ontario's growing problems in affordable housing and with homelessness. Through census statistics and profiles of individual municipalities around Ontario, the study makes two major points. There is a direct correlation between the condition of affordable housing and homelessness, and the problem is widespread in the province beyond Toronto. In fact, according to this and other studies, the problem exists in almost every city and town in the country. Vacancy rates, rents, tenant incomes, and other factors play a major role in creating homelessness. When fully 300,645 Ontario tenant households (1999) pay more than 50% of their income on rent, there is even a greater housing catastrophe waiting to happen.

What is missing at the national and provincial levels is not ideas or program solutions. The key problem has been the reluctance of governments to adopt the sensible recommendations they receive. Where's Home calls on the Ontario government to demonstrate its commitment by implementing a provincial housing strategy that includes: clear targets for new non-profit and co-op units for low-income tenants; clear targets for new supportive housing units, with support services; additional funding for services for homeless people and low-income tenants; adequate social assistance rates, including the shelter component. The federal government must demonstrate its commitment by implementing a national housing strategy that includes targets for new units and additional funding for new supply and services. Finally, municipal governments, with the support of provincial funds, should continue to develop local housing strategies, including supportive housing. The strategies and programs at each level should be reviewed by the legislatures or councils every six months.

Affordable Housing Framework Agreement: Federal, Provincial, Territorial Commitment for 27,200 Units

Backgrounder from National Housing and Homelessness Network

www.tdrc.net

The federal government said it would spend $680 million on housing over five years, if the provincial governments would match it, creating a $1.36 billion fund. In the 2003 budget, the federal government added another $320 million. Provinces were permitted to include money spent by municipalities and others in their contribution calculations.

Of course, Ontario offered $20 million and used money previously spent, plus monies spent by the municipalities and charities to make up the rest. Provinces must agree to be audited and be accountable for appropriate expenditures and expected performance.

This was supposed to create 27,200 new units of affordable housing (5,440 per year) over five years. While targeted for low to middle income people, nothing in the agreement said that the housing had to be inexpensive enough for those living under Stats Canada's Low Income Cut Off levels (i.e., minimum wage earners and social assistance recipients) to afford it.

Concerning the Failure of the Tenant Protection Act and the Rules and Procedures of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal to Meet Ombudsman Fairness Standards

Katherine Laird, Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO), Legal Clinics Housing Issues Committee (LCHIC), June 2002

http://dawn.thot.net/acto1.html#download

"We are asking that you make recommendations to the Ontario Government that certain sections of the Tenant Protection Act (TPA) be amended, and that certain rules and procedures of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (ORHT) be revised, with a view to introducing greater fairness into the dispute resolution process, and into the rules for regulation of rents."

ACTO is a new legal clinic that advocates for legal protection of the housing rights of low-income tenants and homeless persons. Working with another new clinic called ISAC (Income Security Advocacy Centre), they challenge the legislation and regulations of the provincial and municipal governments relating to housing, homelessness, and poverty.

The recommendations made to the Ombudsman are put into two groups: changes requiring no legislative modifications and those that do. Recommendations in the first include items such as: notices with explanations sent to tenants when evictions are applied for, notices mailed to renters rather than leaving it to landlords to notify, lower fees, more information materials, better training for adjudicators, a database of decisions, accessible and transparent processes, and offering mediation to resolve disputes. In the second category, among others, there are removal of default eviction process, no requirement for written disputes, regulations on eviction considerations, repeal above-guideline rent increases for the cost of utilities. These are all significant non-financial changes that could help reduce evictions and maintain affordability of housing.

Affordable Rental Housing Fact Sheet

Advisory Committee on Homeless & Socially Isolated Persons, City of Toronto, Community and Neighbourhood Services, Social Development and Administration

www.toronto.ca

As of May 2003, the number of homelessness caused deaths had risen to 300 men, women, and children. Toronto's shelter system was stretched beyond its ability to meet the needs of homeless people. There was a growing catalogue of health problems, including outbreaks of tuberculosis and Norwalk-like viruses, scabies, lice, and more affecting those in the shelters or on the streets.

The 1999 survey of household finances by Statistics Canada reports that one-third of the city's renter households (259,164 households or approximately 700,000 people) have annual incomes of $18,955 or less. There are about 70,000 households on Toronto's social housing waiting list that can't afford average market rents in Toronto.

There has been a patchwork of federal, provincial and municipal funding for new affordable housing emerging since 1999, but only a handful of new projects have been built under these programs – far short of what is needed. The Advisory Committee (formerly led by Jack Layton) recommended to City Council that there be affordable housing development in every ward, continued support to City's funding initiatives and homelessness reserves, and advocacy with the federal and provincial governments to provide the resources and regulatory changes necessary.

Response of Housing Action Now! to Toronto's Draft Official Plan

Ann Fitzpatrick for the Housing Action Now! Coalition

As the City of Toronto was consulting the community regarding the new draft Official Plan Act, the Housing Action Now! Coalition, an active community advocacy group, submitted its own responses and recommendations. These were based on their "housing platform" taken up by the Toronto Civic Action Network and its predecessors, newly elected mayor David Miller and the Advisory Committee for Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons of the Toronto City Council.

Recommendations include using a definition of affordability based on income. Housing Action Now's platform states that "housing is 'affordable' if no more than 30% of household income is spent on rent". Another option is to define affordable on the basis of median income rather than average rents. The goal, they state, should be long term affordable housing for those who need it. They argue against using arbitrary vacancy rates out of context to trigger housing efforts and call for the protection of existing affordable units from conversion and/or demolition. They recommend that the city "create an Official Plan that enshrines the right to housing and requires 25% of all new housing stock be affordable".

The report calls for the provision of a full range of housing options, including emergency and transitional housing, supportive housing, co-operative and alternative ownership forms, and second suites (accessory apartments). Pushing the city to be clear and forceful in enshrining housing as a right across the new city, the HAN submission

demonstrates ways to deal with housing and homelessness in a regulatory environment, such as official planning acts.

3. The Broader Context

Canada's Creeping Economic Apartheid

Grace-Edward Galabuzi, Centre for Social Justice, 2001
http://www.socialjustice.org/pdfs/economicapartheid.pdf

"Poverty is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from, and always wondering when the landlord is going to put your furniture out."

"Poverty is always praying that your husband must not lose his job. To me that's poverty."

This report calls attention to the growing racialisation of the gap between the rich and poor, a matter which is proceeding with minimal public and policy attention, despite the dire implications for Canadian society. It challenges some common myths about the economic performance of Canada's racialised communities and shows how historical patterns of differential treatment and occupational segregation in the labour market, and discriminatory governmental and institutional policies and practices, have led to the reproduction of racial inequality in other areas of Canadian society.

The poor are increasingly exposed to homelessness in urban areas. A recent taskforce report on homelessness in Ontario's Peel region investigated homelessness among a number of racialised communities including Punjabi, Vietnamese, Tamil, Spanish Speaking and Caribbean. Its findings suggest that the problem of homelessness is growing in these communities, especially among refugees. The research shows that Canada's racialised groups have difficulty accessing the limited stock of housing in very tight housing markets in the major urban centres. The role of the state in providing affordable housing is indispensable. It is imperative that a national affordable housing program be re-established and that its elements address specifically the segregationist nature of the housing market in Canada's urban centres. This report, along with the Michael Ornstein report on Toronto, is essential reading for people dealing with homelessness and the causal forces creating it.

A New Measure of Poverty

Andrew Mitchell, Richard Shillington, and Hindia Mohamoud. Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2003
www.socialplanningtoronto.org Research and Policy Updates

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) was directed to devise a new measure of poverty based on a "market basket" approach in order to evaluate the impact of the National Child Benefit. This was supposed to be a critical response to all the social scientists and social policy analysts/researchers who had used the Statistics Canada to

show how many people in Canada were living under the [unofficial] poverty line. The Fraser Institute had used a version of the Market Basket Measure (MBM) to come up with a much reduced level of poverty, but no other credible organizations had found their measurement to be valid for a reasonable standard of living.

While this latest salvo in the poverty research wars saw some unusual conclusions, such as the high rates of poverty for unattached elderly women in Ontario and Quebec, the MBM methods have very large discrepancies within them. Not surprisingly, the new MBM of the federal government confirmed the traditional approaches to measuring poverty and actually produced even higher numbers than the others. That's with the bar set lower than the income required for full social inclusion. Trying to find new numbers to justify more restrictive social policies was not going to be successful with this measurement tool. This short report, while dealing with the slightly esoteric realm of methodological issues, is an interesting demonstration of the government's failed attempt to define away poverty. Our political leaders show their lack of political will to truly eliminate poverty – and thus homelessness directly caused by it – whether it's among children, Aboriginals or anyone else.

A Choice between Investing in Canada's Cities or Disinvesting in Canada's Future

TD Bank Financial Group, (TD Economics, Special Report, April 2002)
http://www.td.com/economics/special/db_cities0402.pdf

As part of the national discussion on the future of Canadian cities, TD Economics undertook a special study resulting in this sizeable report. While not specifically dealing with homelessness, it analyses the state of the city today, it's problems, how it got that way, how it compares with European and U.S. cities and what changes are needed to fix these problems.

"Two-thirds of Canada's population, employment and real output" are located in large urban centres, such as the Greater Toronto Area. Suburban sprawl, culture, quality of life (including income disparity and homelessness), young and highly skilled and highly diverse workforce, proximity to U.S. markets are part of that assessment. There are many challenges in unique cities like Toronto, but the city governments do not have adequate financial resources or funding tools to deal with them and grow. Cities are cash strapped and property taxes are a totally inadequate means to raise revenues.

While scolding the City government to fix its own problems, it calls on the federal and provincial government to provide the necessary legislation, regulatory changes and budget allocations to enable the city to be an engine of growth and development for the country. This is a strong advocacy tool in dealing with politicians who see themselves as servants to the corporate sector.

Alternative Federal Budget 1998-2004

Various authors

www.policyalternatives.ca

The Alternative Federal Budget is prepared each year by a coalition of community, labour, and social advocacy organizations, coordinated by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. This statement represents the current thinking of AFB participants regarding the current fiscal situation faced by the federal government, and outlines the broad policy options, which will shape the coming budget-making process.

The Alternative Federal Budget Coalition forecasted a $40 billion surplus between 2000-2003 and the Federal Finance Department's forecast was $7.9 billion. In the end, there was a $39.7 billion surplus for the federal government, which undoubtedly is inconvenient for justifying cuts to programs or an inability to fund desperately needed housing and child poverty strategies. What a problem for the new Paul Martin regime in the decade long Liberal dynasty, especially since he was the principle author of the 1990 alternative housing strategy attacking the Mulroney Conservatives when they were trying to step away from the housing sector. This has a great deal of information from different authors and is very useful for those undertaking interventions at the federal level.

Two Solutions for Urban Poverty (Presentation to the TD Forum on Canada's Standard of Living)

Frances Lankin, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto, 2000
www.uwgt.org/who_we_help/pdfs/Two-Solutions-for-Urban-Poverty_Frances%20Lankin.pdf

This paper proposes solutions to urban poverty that both increase the quality of life in Canada's large cities and make them more economically competitive in the global marketplace. The first group tries to match skills of immigrants to the shortage of skilled trades and professionals through recognizing competencies and qualifications of newcomers. The second series addresses the need for affordable housing. Both the governments in Canada and the private sector are called upon to improve conditions facing poor people, many of whom suffer from racial and ethnocultural discrimination.

Using data from Statistics Canada and a study on poverty in the 1990s done jointly by the UWGT with the Canadian Council on Social Development, called "A Decade of Decline" and also a report by Michael Ornstein on the disparity of poverty in Toronto by race and nationality, Lankin gives a brief analysis of the relationship between immigration and poverty leading to the conditions for non-European residents in Toronto over the last decade. She suggests that there are solutions and they include, on the immigration side: coordinated government settlement policies and services, recognition of credentials of foreign-trained professionals and trades people, and greater collaboration between government and the non-profit sector. On the housing side, Lankin puts forward the ideas that 1) Canada needs a national housing strategy, 2) the voluntary sector must assume leadership in the development of local "strategies for preventing and eliminating homelessness", and 3) greater cooperation between

governments and the voluntary sector. This is a helpful summary of many commonly held positions of advocates by an influential person.

Toronto's Quiet Crisis: The Case for Social and Community Infrastructure Investment

Peter Clutterbuck and Rob Howarth, Toronto Civic Action Network and the Centre for Urban and Community Studies/UT, November 2002
http://www.urbancenter.utoronto.ca/researchbulletin.html

The authors make a case for increasing investment in Toronto's community programs and facilities, such as childcare, public libraries, recreation programs, seniors' homes, public health units, and programs for newcomers. Cutbacks and downloading have eroded services and standards in this sector. However, as senior levels of government recognize the vital role of cities in the social and economic health of the country, and begin to invest in hard infrastructure, funds may become available for investment in the social infrastructure. Rather than converting freed-up funds into property tax reductions or absorbing them as cost savings, Toronto should redirect the funds into the social infrastructure in order to enhance the quality of life in the city.

Directed at city councillors in Toronto, Clutterbuck and Howarth bring attention to the decaying state of the city's social and community infrastructure following a decade (or more) of cutbacks and losses. It is time, they say, that a baseline is created for future planning and development in the city's "social and community capacity". For those who have continued to suffer either from cuts to funding, loss of funding, stagnating funding, core to project funding shifts and increasing costs, this document is an acknowledgement of the community's struggles.

4. Health and Social Services

Poverty, Income Inequality, and Health in Canada

Dr. Dennis Raphael Toronto: CSJ Foundation for Research and Education, June 2002
http://www.socialjustice.org/pdfs/PovertyIncomeHealth.pdf

"Does the health sector have a role in raising the issue of how poverty and income inequality affect health?" That depends on which institution or government is answering the question. Studies continually show the close causal relation between poverty/income inequality and health. It is one of the most important determinants and indicators of health for people everywhere, including Canada. Dennis Raphael, a leading academic in the field of health promotion, critiques government policies and makes the case that they threaten the health of Canadians, not to mention peace, order and good governance.

Raphael takes his recommendations from studies that have been done for Britain and other places and lists them according to categories, such as: general recommendations

(e.g., health assessments using health inequalities); poverty, tax and benefits (especially for women of child-bearing age, expectant mothers, young children and older people); education funding for schools serving children from low income families; education: investment in high-quality training for young and long-term unemployed people; affordable housing increased and with access to health care for officially and unofficially homeless people; mobility, transport and pollution; nutrition and agriculture policies; families: high quality day care and pre-school education with extra resources for disadvantaged communities; suicide prevention measures among young people and seriously mentally ill people; social security benefits improved; ethnic minorities given special consideration aimed at reducing socio-economic inequalities; improving conditions of young men in terms of accidents and unemployment; and finally, he recommends a "national health system" that provides equitable access to effective care at all levels and across the country.

Our Health...Our Say! The Word from the Street on Ontario's Health Care System
Ontario Health Coalition, 2001
www.google.ca/search?q=cache:u8T8bvwKdS8J:www.web.net/ohc/ourhealth.htm+%22The+Word+from+the+Street+on+Ontario%27s+Health+Care+System%22&hl=en&ie=UTF-8

When the Ontario Conservative government sent out a survey to some homes called, *"We Want to Hear From You On Health Care: What's working for you? What isn't?"* it was an exercise in manipulated questioning. A group called the Our Health, Our Say Coalition was formed and set about consulting with the most impoverished and least consulted segment of the population, homeless people. What they discovered when they distributed their survey to numerous community agencies frequented by homeless, under housed, and ethno-racially diverse people was that without a Patients' Charter of Rights, these people would have little or no health care.

"Everyone deserves the same quality of care no matter if they're poor, middle class, or rich." Among the ten points in the "Charter" were points that dealt with accessibility, bias and discrimination, respect, appropriate supports, financial assistance, release from care into supportive environment, more staff and hospital beds, right to adequate food and housing, identification cards with pictures and names good for at least one year, and no two-tiered health care.

Yes, In My Back Yard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers
Joy Connelly, Home Coming/Community Choice Coalition, 2003
www.onpha.on.ca/affordable_housing_initiatives/nimby/doc/nimby_tool_kit.pdf

"Imagine your elected representative telling you, 'there are too many of your kind in this neighbourhood.' Imagine residents' associations who want to examine your personal history before allowing you to move into the neighbourhood. Imagine your new neighbours – neighbours who say they have nothing personal against you –

slandering you through e-mail, flyers, posters, at public meetings and to your face." With that poignant statement of the reality for consumer-survivors, so begins this very useful guide to fighting pervasive social barriers for people with mental handicaps (useful also for advocates of poverty-burdened families, homeless individuals, couples, and youth at risk).

The book describes the rights of people with mental illness under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It outlines the planning approvals process, helps supportive housing developers know what to expect, and suggests ways to prepare for community consultation. *Yes, In My Backyard,* according to the ONPHA website, also describes strategies that have helped supportive housing developers navigate through community opposition and offers answers to the most predictable objections to housing for people with mental illness.

5. Aboriginal Homelessness

Literature Review: Aboriginal Peoples and Homelessness

Mary Ann Beavis, Nancy Klos, Tom Carter and Christian Douchant (Institute of Urban Studies - The University of Winnipeg). Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, January 1997

http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/ho/abpeho_001.cfm

Urban and Rural Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness research is very limited. What there is comes mainly from the western provinces and territories. The most recent survey of Aboriginal Peoples Survey showed conditions for the one million Native peoples, especially in the cities and on many reserves, and particulary young people, to be very challenging.

In 2000-2001, the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle received $1.5M for training and employment initiatives in Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto and in 2001 the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres got $1M to deal with urban Aboriginal homelessness. In 2003, the federal government announced $45M for Aboriginal housing and homelessness in Canada, but the allocations have in the past proven difficult for the government to make and much of the funding has not been distributed.

Urban Aboriginal Homelessness: National Homelessness Initiative, Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Component

Government of Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, 2003

http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/initiative/uah_e.asp

Urban Aboriginal homelessness is a growing crisis in Canada. In 2003, the federal government allocated $45 million to the National Homelessness Initiative targeted to deal with this particular aspect of homelessness. The Urban Aboriginal Homelessness component is supposed to be coordinated with both the government's Supporting

Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) funding and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. However, over the past three years, only a few million dollars have found their way into Native community initiatives in Ontario, where there are hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people in the cities (especially Toronto) and many more in totally inadequate housing on various First Nations lands.

National Aboriginal Housing Association (Speech to Federation of Canadian Municipalities Standing Committee on Municipal-Aboriginal Relations)

George Devine, Ottawa: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, December 1999

http://www.urbancenter.utoronto.ca/pdfs/elibrary/NAHA.pdf

NAHA is a national association of urban Aboriginal housing providers, committed to building safe and healthy communities by helping Aboriginal housing providers achieve standards of excellence in the delivery and management of affordable housing and support services. Formed in 1993, NAHA brings together 110 housing providers located in all provinces and territories.

The NAHA and other First Nations organizations opposed the transfer of responsibility for urban aboriginal housing from the Assisted Urban Aboriginal Housing Portfolio to the province and municipalities without the necessary guarantees of cultural accommodation and standards that are appropriate to Native households in the cities. They demanded that the federal government transfer the responsibility to First Nations organizations, but that was refused. NAHA will continue to call upon federal and provincial governments to ensure that the portfolio remains with the Aboriginal community. This portfolio serves the most fragile households and the programs and structures developed need to be kept.

Conclusion

Five years after it was issued, the Golden Report (along with its background papers) provides a firm base of solid research on homelessness. The Mayor's Homelessness Task Force provided work that is well supplemented by the City's annual report on homelessness and other studies.

The overall lack of progress on the homelessness problem itself cannot be blamed on lack of research, but on a lack of government action and a national housing strategy.

Having said that, the situation is continuing to evolve. We have, for the time being, higher vacancy rates than we have had in a generation. This presents opportunities but also some danger that the situation will be misread. We also have continuing immigration combined with concerns that many groups need more help in accessing affordable housing and that the experience in doing so differs between different groups.

What follows, then, is a list of gaps our team found in the course of researching this literature survey and consulting with outside experts. In some cases, work is already underway and this is indicated where we are aware of it. These are presented in no particular order.

1. A detailed academic study of the Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) phenomenon is needed to complement ONPHA's recent "how to" pamphlet for supportive housing providers. This should include recommendations for legislative changes that would reduce or eliminate roadblocks that can be used to block affordable housing projects.

2. More research on the specific situation of different immigrant groups is also needed. There has been some work done in this area but not for all groups. Situations also change over time. Other specific groups such as homeless seniors also need more study.

3. More information is needed on evictions--both the actual numbers and relationship to homelessness. There is much information that relies on eviction applications--actual evictions are notoriously hard to trace because tenants often leave without any legal record being created. The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation did some excellent work on evictions in 2000, but it did not provide a comprehensive count. Researchers Sylvia Novac and Linda Lapointe are coming out with a new report in this area.

4. More work is also needed on rent control--the impact of rent control and its absence on homelessness

5. There is an immediate need for research determining whether current high vacancy rates are permanent or (more likely) will only last for a couple of years.

This is urgent as some may argue that current vacancy rates make new social housing and rent control unnecessary.

6. There should be an updated comparison of the effectiveness of subsidizing private developers to provide affordable housing versus co-op/non-profit housing. There was work done on this in the early 1990s that needs to be updated. More housing groups are now calling for private rent supplements to be part of the picture though they say this should be combined with construction of new affordable housing.

7. A more detailed examination of housing discrimination is needed. Some specific gaps were identified in a study done for CMHC last year.

8. Qualitative research of the issue as experienced by the homeless themselves is needed; either written by the homeless or through interviews with them. This should include long interviews with specific sub-groups both on how they became homeless and what they need to leave it. This includes their evaluation of the usefulness and effectiveness of current services. There has been some work done in this area but not enough.

9. More specific and detailed work is needed on which public policy changes actually increased the number of homeless and prevented those already homeless from getting out of homelessness.

10. More work should be done on appropriate discharge planning from our jails, hospitals, and other institutions.

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